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March 24, 2014

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Funding Available to Help Colorado Specialty Crops

LAKEWOOD, Colo. – From cantaloupe and carrots to flowers and potatoes, Colorado produces a wide variety of fruits, vegetables and other specialty crops. To help develop and promote these products, the Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) is seeking proposals for the *Specialty Crops Block Grant Program*. Specialty crops are defined as fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, and nursery crops including floriculture and sod.

“The diversity of Colorado’s specialty crops is staggering,” said Casey Palmer, CDA Marketing Specialist. “This grant helps specialty crop growers and organizations access valuable resources for research and promotion.”

Colorado’s specialty crops represent approximately 10 percent of Colorado’s total agricultural cash receipts. In 2012, cash receipts from specialty crops totaled more than \$675 million.

The grant program is funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) which partners with state departments of agriculture to enhance the competitiveness of specialty crop producers in areas such as marketing, promotion, education, research, trade and nutrition. The Colorado Department of Agriculture must submit a request outlining projects to the USDA in

order to receive these funds. This application process determines which projects are included in Colorado's application to the USDA.

The CDA anticipates that approximately \$700,000 will be available, with approved projects starting early in 2015. Producer groups, organizations, and associations, as well as state and local organizations, academia and other specialty crops stakeholders are eligible to apply either as single entities or in combined efforts. Proposals submitted by individual producers must demonstrate that the potential impact of the project will accrue to a broader group of similar producers, region or industry segment.

Proposals must be received by close of business (4:30pm) on May 1, 2014. For more information and an application, visit www.colorado.gov/ag/specialtycropgrant or call (303) 239-4123.

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